17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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tiresome to those who encounter them, do not merit discussion. Subordination and obedience are not in themselves virtues. That the Shilluk are often highly insolent to those in authority is undeniable. This insolence usually takes the form of a supercilious silence and apparent complete disdain implying that "diplomatic relations have now been broken off." This attitude is really not exactly what it seems. In fact it is suppressed rage; but since their symptoms of temper differ from our own we are inclined, often wrongly, to think that it is pure calculated insolence.

The Shilluk have a code of manners which is remarkable. This is instilled into them when young. Even as neatness and order prevail within their houses so are the children taught good manners. When four or five years of age they are made to sit up straight at meals and eat properly. These good manners remain with them through life and distinguish their bearing from that of neighbouring tribes. Doubtless it is in part an empty form but the fact remains that the Shilluk manners are excellent, and their way of sitting in a meeting with their legs drawn backwards to one side and the soles of their feet concealed from view is very neat. No smoking is tolerated at such meetings and their general tone is orderly.

There is a habit, when listening to a superior speaking, of punctuating his remarks with a formal indication of assent. The word thus used varies with the speaker, and is most obvious when the speaker is the *Reth*. Here the word is either *bile kwan* ("the likeness of his ancestor," *i.e.*, Nyikang) or *Kwaajuok* ("God's last born"). For members of *Kwar Reth* the word is *Kaiyo*, for the *Orore* it is *Nyagul* and for some reason for the *Jwag* clan it is *Dhiang*.[1]

It has already been explained how certain members of the *Kwar Reth* must be addressed by their titles or with their titles prefixed to their names. There are also certain respectful modifications which must be made to normal speech when speaking to or about the *Reth*, a *Nyiwuk*, or anyone of importance. These modifications relate largely to verbs of motion. The fiction has to be laboriously maintained that such

1. *Kaiyo* means "eldest born," *Nyagul* means "one of the family" and *Dhiang* means, literally "cow."

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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224 tormentors and overturn and smash the canoe, killing or maiming its occupants. In Tonga I once saw a youth whose shoulder had almost been torn away by a hippopotamus. With some companions he had been hunting in the Bahr-el-Gazal when the hippo they were attacking charged the canoe and flung its occupants into the water. He had the misfortune to fall near the enraged animal which seized his shoulder with its powerful teeth and tore the flesh. He had been taken first to the mission of Yoynyang where the priest dressed his wound as best he could, and then brought on to Tonga. When I saw him he was sitting quite impassively, [152] enduring the pain with stoicism as the Sister dressed his [743] torn shoulder while waiting for a boat to take him to the hospital in Malakal.

224 787 One peculiar feature of a hippo hunt is that the hunters, before beginning their operations, sacrifice a hen by drowning it in the river. They then bury it in the reeds at the river's edge and one (sometimes two) of them, shaking convulsively, goes into a kind of ecstatic frenzy during which he foretells the number of beasts that will be killed; one may plump for three, two large ones and a small, the other for five, three big and two small. It is remarkable that a single 'shaker's' forecast is often completely accurate, though whether this is due to his making a lucky guess, or being prompted by his guardian angel, I would hesitate to say. It is significant, however, that in later life many of these [754] amateur prophets become witch doctors.

461 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' is a saying as true of the Shilluk as of any other race of mankind, and after all his sowing and reaping, building and thatching, fishing and hunting, his 'capacity for innocent enjoyment is just as great as any honest man's'. A European travelling through Shilluk country on a hot, windless afternoon and seeing a cloud of dust rising into the air at some distance before him might wonder what freak of nature was causing a dust storm in that particular spot, when all around was so still and breathless. Approaching nearer to the phenomenon,

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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and that one of the tins containing ninety piastres (about 18*s.*) had been stolen. The District Chief was called and held solemn court on the verandah of the house. He, however, could not discover the thief and therefor gave judgment that the owner of the box was responsible for the safety of the money entrusted to him and that he was to refund the missing money and to be held in custody until he did so. This seemed rather unfair on Henry, the owner of the box, since he had gained nothing from acting as banker to the rest, yet unless the thief was found there was nothing that we could do about the matter and it seemed to be closed. Two days later we were surprised to learn that one of the boys had owned up to the theft and had refunded the money. We were pleased, too, because we thought that although the boy had acted meanly in stealing his companion's savings, at least he had been man enough to come forward to save Henry from having to pay the penalty for the theft. We were speedily disillusioned as to his motive for confessing; the other boys knew perfectly well that Henry was innocent of taking the money, and they had a very strong idea who had. Accordingly they subscribed to buy a sheep which was given to the local witch doctor as a fee for finding the thief. The jal yath let it be known that he would sacrifice the sheep at a certain hour, and the moment the animal died so would the culprit; the latter had not the courage to defy the curse but promptly confessed his guilt.

When an animal is slain in sacrifice, great importance is attached to the position in which it falls. If the animal is a bull, it is not usually slain outright, but wounded by a spear thrust and allowed free. If it should wander towards the river or towards the shrine before it dies, that is taken as a sign that the sacrifice is acceptable to Nyikang. So, too, is it taken as a good omen if the beast in collapsing falls on its left side; if it should fall on its right side then the portents are unfavourable, and should it fall neither to right nor left but simply crumple up and fall forward with forefeet doubled beneath it, that would presage some terrible disaster. The actual spearing of the victim is generally done by